

Customers are gaining, whether they switch or not. Where Ameritech now competes, incumbent providers have offered better deals, added free channels and improved customer service. Incumbents say they planned some of these enhancements long before Ameritech arrived but acknowledge they are more aggressive in competitive cities.

In St. Clair Shores, a blue-collar enclave northeast of Detroit, Comcast bills include a vow to "meet or beat any price." MediaOne started giving customers the HBO channel free—a \$9.69 per month value—in return for one-year commitments to its service. MediaOne also rolled out its popular high-speed Internet-access service where Ameritech offers cable.

In Troy, north of Detroit, hardwood-floor salesman Glenn Lancot is stunned to find Lisa Kocsis, TCI's local marketing coordinator, at his front door asking if he has any problems with TCI. She says she recently started this door-to-door campaign because "I think people need to know we care how their cable picture looks." A TCI technician waits nearby in a pickup truck, ready to sharpen a fuzzy picture or repair a faulty remote.

A cable line has fallen in Mr. Lancot's backyard. "I called like a couple of weeks ago and never heard from you," he says. Ms. Kocsis apologizes and promises to have the problem fixed "in the next 24 hours." She hands him a book of coupons worth \$100 and one of her personal business cards. Mr. Lancot looks incredulous. "Call you if I have a problem?" he says. "Call me," she insists.

Down the street, dentist James Nassar just laughs when Ms. Kocsis introduces herself. "You're running scared," he says. But he adds that he is happy with TCI and doesn't want to change.

Changing cable service isn't as simple as, for example, switching long-distance phone companies. Although a new provider can use old wiring inside the house, a new connection is needed outside. Consumers also must learn to use new remote-control devices and channel lineups.

Incumbents say their service is more appreciated now that comparisons are possible. But it is clear that Ameritech gets under their skin. Helen Brodie, a MediaOne vice president for marketing, says Ameritech discounts are "misleading" because they are temporary and "disruptive to companies that are trying to run themselves in a sound manner; we have shareholders." John McNeel, general manager of TCI's local system, dismisses Ameritech's practice of equipping installers with vacuum cleaners. "We prefer that our technicians don't make messes to begin with," he says.

#### FOUR-CENT DEAL

Consumers greet Ameritech with a mixture of delight, befuddlement, pent-up anger—and smarts. Leo Freckelton, an Ameritech installation manager, laments his uncle's refusal to switch to Ameritech. "He's the only one in the family who hasn't," Mr. Freckelton says. Instead, his uncle has used Ameritech offers to wangle better deals from Comcast. "I think [Comcast] is beating us by four cents" a month, Mr. Freckelton frets.

Some just want something new. David Kincaid, a machine-shop worker in Troy, was spending more than \$70 a month with TCI. "I don't know what I'm going to pay for Ameritech, but I want something to compare," he says. Pushing a button on Ameritech's interactive remote, he orders an episode of "The Brady Bunch," already in progress. A plot-summary box appears in a corner of the screen: "Jan makes promises she can't keep in order to win a popularity

contest," Mr. Kincaid smiles. "Cool," he says.

But change comes hard, even for some—such as Mr. Kline of St. Clair Shores—who say they are displeased with their provider. Mr. Kline is so upset with Comcast that he cuts off Mr. Roland's Ameritech sales pitch to extend his rant. "You came here and now you're gonna listen," he says. But when Mr. Roland finally offers a package that appears to be better than what Comcast gives Mr. Kline, the man scoffs. "You're priming the pump," he says, "You'll get it back from me in the long run."

Having failed to make the sale, Mr. Roland shakes his head. "Some people don't realize that competition is going to change things," he says. "It's their mindset that [cable TV] is a monopoly, and they don't really understand competition."

Mr. Roland, who just turned 24, wears an earnest smile and keeps his red hair neatly combed. This is his first job since college, and he says he loves it, because "I get to talk to people and set my own hours." On a good day he adds five or six subscribers; his record is 14. His salary and commissions let him afford a new Acura couple and season tickets to Detroit Red Wings hockey games.

#### PEER PRESSURE

He spends afternoons and evenings knocking on doors and juggling follow-ups on his cell phone and pager. "A lot of people turn me away and then all their neighbors sign up and then they call me," he says. Not everyone welcomes him, though. One man told Mr. Roland "If I didn't get off his property, he was going to shoot me."

One afternoon in Troy, Mr. Roland lobbies Donald Boisvenue, a computer specialist who slumps in his front door in cutoff jeans and a sweatshirt, looking bored. Mr. Roland shows him a picture of Ameritech's on-screen channel guide. "That doesn't impress me much," Mr. Boisvenue says. Mr. Roland explains how the remote makes it easy to program a VCR. "Programming a VCR is no big whoop," Mr. Boisvenue says. Mr. Roland asks how much TCI charges. "They're too expensive," Mr. Boisvenue says, "but you guys are going to be the same." Mr. Roland leaves a brochure and heads to the next house. "Not good," he says.

An hour later, though, a voice-mail message from Mr. Boisvenue asks him to return. Sitting in his family room, Mr. Boisvenue confesses that his wife saw Ameritech's brochure and demanded, "Why didn't you try this?" He says Mrs. Boisvenue is upset with TCI price increases, and now Mr. Boisvenue starts recalling things "that drive me crazy" about TCI. He signs up.

Back in his car, Mr. Roland phones Walter Bartels, 29, a human-resources professional. Mr. Bartels had complained two weeks earlier that Ameritech workers damaged his lawn while burying cable. The company's quick response so impressed him that he wants to cancel TCI and take Ameritech. Mr. Roland tells him his monthly bill will drop to \$21 from \$28, although it will climb to \$31 after a one-year discount expires. Clicking off his cell phone, Mr. Roland says, "That's a success story; you should've heard the conversations we had the other day."

But two weeks later in St. Clair Shores, Downing Street is a downer for Mr. Roland. At house after house, people either aren't home or they say they are satisfied with Comcast. "I've never seen so many people happy with their cable service," he complains. Just then a Comcast van pulls up and Mr. Roland watches balefully as a technician trots up to a house. "They're giving everybody their new interactive box," Mr. Roland says. "Everything we're doing, they're copying." (Comcast says it decided to upgrade local systems three years ago.)

He finally gets to make a pitch in the living room of Robert and Evelyn Mutart. Like many older people, they aren't keen about the high-tech remote or on-screen guide. But Mrs. Mutart wonders whether the Disney Channel comes free. "Yep," Mr. Roland says, "You'll get it 24 hours a day." Mr. Mutart, a 73-year-old retired electrician, grins. "Yeah," he says, "I need the Disney Channel 24 hours a day." Mr. Roland leaves without making a sale—but the Mutarts subscribe several days later.

He has better luck on Blackburn Street. Norman and Joanne Galeski are intrigued by the remote's VCR-programming feature. "How long do we have to go to school to learn all this?" Mr. Galeski quips. His wife doubts that Ameritech really will cost less. "I'm sure after everybody commits to this, you'll jack up the price," she says. If so, Mr. Roland says, "there's nothing stopping you from going back to Comcast."

Finally, Mr. Galeski says he wants to switch. "You better not screw this up because it took me a year to figure this out," chides his wife, pointing at the VCR. "If it doesn't work out, you can call [Comcast] back."

The family next door interrupts a baked ham dinner to welcome Mr. Roland. "You made a sale before you walked in," says Fred Hawreluk, a bank official. "Just tell me what you've got and how much it costs."

While Molly the yellow Labrador sniffs Mr. Roland's leg, Mr. Hawreluk explains that he soured on Comcast over a billing dispute involving \$8 a month. "It wasn't the money, it was the principle," he says. Still, he balks after scanning Ameritech's channel lineup: "I'm not sure we'll be getting everything we get from Comcast."

His wife shushes him: "We don't watch all of that stuff anyway."

Mr. Roland just smiles and asks if he can use the phone to schedule an installation.

#### IN HONOR OF IRENE M. MORROW

#### HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Irene Morrow, who will receive an award this week for outstanding contributions to the Greater Cleveland community from International Services Center [ISC] in Cleveland, OH.

International Services Center is an agency that assists refugees, immigrants, and other newcomers to the United States to overcome social and economic barriers and adjust to a new culture and way of life. The organization is honoring four individuals this year for their exceptional work on intercultural and interracial issues. These individuals have been chosen because of their commitment to the community and their lifelong achievements which reflect the spirit and the mission of ISC.

Ms. Morrow worked in public service from 1964 through her retirement in 1989. She served as deputy auditor in charge of Cuyahoga County payrolls for 8 years. She spent the next 17 years serving as personnel administrator and secretary of the Civil Service Commission for the city of Cleveland. Upon her retirement from civil service, she embarked on another career in food management and service.

Ms. Morrow has been involved in numerous community organizations and associations.

She was elected as executive secretary of the Association of Polish Women in 1975. She has served as executive secretary and treasurer of the American Nationalities Movement ever since 1978. Ms. Morrow had the distinction of being elected the first woman president of the Republican Ripon Club. In addition, she serves on the boards of several other community organizations, including International Services Center.

Ms. Morrow has been well recognized for her work in the community. Her list of awards and honors includes: 1 of the 40 outstanding Ohio Women Achievers, presented by Barbara Bush; Polish Person of the Year, presented by the Polonia Foundation; Member of the Year, offered by the American Nationalities Movement; and Appreciation Award from the United Hungarian Societies. Both Mayor Ralph Perk and Mayor George Voinovich have presented Ms. Morrow with Keys to the City Awards.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in congratulating Irene Morrow on a lifetime of wonderful work for the multicultural community in the Greater Cleveland area.

#### LET'S ABOLISH THE TAX CODE

### HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 24, 1997*

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I joined my colleagues, BILL PAXON, JOE SCARBOROUGH, Senator SAM BROWNBACK, and others to seriously discuss a repeal of the Tax Code. We agreed that the IRS and the Tax Code represent governmental arrogance at its highest level. It punishes the right things and rewards the wrong things. We need to shut down the IRS and put more money back into the hands of taxpayers.

Common sense tells me that the IRS is far too large and intrusive. Consider that the IRS has more than 136,000 employees, while the INS has only 6,500 border patrol agents. That's about 20 times more people to take our money than to protect our borders. That's simply outrageous. The time has come to abolish the IRS.

Mr. Speaker, improving the quality of life in America begins with letting families keep more of what they earn. In the last half century alone, the Federal Government's take from families has skyrocketed from only 5 to over 24 percent. Add taxes at the State and local level, and nearly half a family's take-home pay is spent just to keep government bureaucracies running. That's a sign of a nation headed in the wrong direction.

Lowering taxes returns power to where it rightfully belongs, out of the hands of government and into the homes of families. Today, I am pleased that our colleagues in the Senate have joined us in support of serious tax reform. I hope every American will support our crusade to put more money in the hands of hard-working taxpayers.

#### THE GREEDY

### HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 24, 1997*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, a move is under way to let doctors force patients to give up their Medicare benefits so that a handful of doctors can charge them anything they want—without limit.

This is a gift to the greediest doctors in the nation.

Ninety-five percent of the Nation's doctors accept new Medicare patients and the Medicare fee schedule. The independent congressional advisory panel known as the Physician Payment Review Commission reports that this is comparable to the rate of doctors who are accepting new private, non-Medicare patients. In other words, there is no noticeable difference in access—ability to see a doctor—between Medicare and non-Medicare patients.

Doctors who accept Medicare and its fee schedule understand the Hippocratic Oath and the social compact in which society has paid hundreds of billions of dollars for the education and training and research that make American doctors special and in turn, these doctors accept the Medicare payment system.

But Congress is about to cater to the few who want more, more, more from people in their hour of illness.

The Employee Benefit Research Institute in its September, 1997 Issue Brief shows what a special gift this legislation will be to a few doctors who are out of step with their colleagues:

Recent findings indicate that only between 4 percent and 6 percent of physicians accepting new patients were not accepting new Medicare patients. One survey found that between 1991 and 1992, the proportion of physicians not accepting new Medicare patients increased from 4 percent to 5.9 percent (Lee and Gillis, 1994). The same survey found that between 1992 and 1993 the percentage of physicians not accepting new Medicare patients decreased to 4.7 percent. Surveys by the Physician Payment Review Commission (PPRC) also found that in 1993 less than 5 percent of physicians were not accepting new Medicare patients (Physician Payment Review Commission, 1994). The PPRC study concluded that the implementation of the Medicare fee schedule has not caused physicians to close their practices to Medicare patients.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

### HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 24, 1997*

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I take the floor of the House today to honor and pay tribute to one of the finest institutions of higher learning in my district, La Sierra University. La Sierra, located in Riverside, CA, has been chosen by the John Templeton Foundation for its 1997–98 honor roll of character-building colleges.

La Sierra is one of only eight colleges and universities in California to earn this distinction, which is given to academic institutions that emphasize character building as an integral part of undergraduate education. Selection was based on meeting five criteria estab-

lished by the John Templeton Foundation: First, inspires students to develop and strengthen their moral reasoning skills; second, encourages spiritual growth and moral values; third, provides community building experiences; fourth, advocates a drug-free lifestyle; and fifth, conducts a critical assessment of character-building projects and activities.

In a society that no longer looks to religion and a sense of community as the foundation for a quality education. La Sierra University is proof that it can be done. Students are expected to strive to their full potential, seek the truth in themselves and everything around them, and to give back to their world. General education courses in religion and ethics lay a basis for understanding the importance of morality. And through the community service requirement, students learn firsthand the need for volunteerism and how important it is to give assistance to those less fortunate.

On behalf of the citizens of California's 43rd Congressional District, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the students, faculty, and administration of La Sierra University for being recognized as a character-building college.

#### IN HONOR OF THE CLEVELAND-MARSHALL COLLEGE OF LAW

### HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 24, 1997*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law on the celebration of its centennial this weekend. This anniversary also marks the dedication of a new law library on the campus.

The Cleveland Law School was founded in 1897 and was the first law school in Ohio to admit women and one of the first to admit minorities. Some of the more prestigious Cleveland Law School graduates are the first woman appointed to a Federal judgeship, the first woman elected as a municipal court judge, the first African-American woman lawyer, and a string of judges, mayors, Congressmen, State legislators, and countless other community leaders.

The college of law is Ohio's largest law school, and the only public law school in the city of Cleveland. The faculty is nationally recognized for its research and scholarship. The college provides students with a curriculum of traditional courses as well as opportunities to participate in four legal clinics, moot court teams, and two student-edited law journals. Now, the school also offers the new Cleveland-Marshall Law Library, housing the second largest academic law collection in Ohio. The library boasts extensive collections on many different aspects of State and Federal law, a large computer lab, and extensive electronic research capabilities.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in commemorating the centennial of this superior institution, the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and its new law library.